

# IPAN Forum on the dangers of the U.S. Force Posture Agreement and how to campaign for its termination

Richard Tanter

21 May 2023

[rtanter@nautilus.org](mailto:rtanter@nautilus.org)

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[recording of an extended version of this talk to be available at this talks site shortly]

# B-52s, submarines folly, AUSMIN delights, Pine Gap expansion

- Key backgrounds:
  - Higher tempo of integration into US war planning
  - concomitant loss of Australian strategic autonomy
  - = High-technology alliance-dependent liberal militarization
  - Chaos of defence planning driven by domestic politics and desire to cling to the US
- B-52H Bomber Task Force to RAAF Tindal in Katherine
  - First Morrison \$1 bn. expansion of Tindal
  - Then USAF tender for further expansion to accommodate up to six B-52H strategic bombers (non-nuclear version) rotating from Barksdale AFB, Louisiana and Guam
    - Aim is to lessen vulnerability strategic bomber task force to Chinese long-range missile attack
  - Australia is to supply RAAF tankers and E-7A Wedgetail early warning and control aircraft and F-35 protection.
  - Key issue is danger of loophole in South Pacific Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty which allows nuclear-armed transit visits by B-52H nuclear-capable version.
    - Need for peace movement visual monitoring
    - Need for refusal by Albanese government to allow such visits.
- AUSMIN 2022 delights – Posture review, logistics, Marines (sexual assaults), space cooperation, submarine visits,
- US Studies Center, Sydney Uni

Source: Modified from Richard Tanter, 'Tightly Bound: The United States and Australia's Alliance-Dependent Militarization', *Global Asia*, Vol.13 No.1 (2018)



“Joint” and “collaborative” bases, according to  
Richard Marles, [“Securing Sovereignty”, Ministerial Statement, 9 February 2023](#)

“Australia’s cooperation with the United States through joint and collaborative facilities is one of our most longstanding security arrangements...

“Australia jointly operates three facilities with the United States – the Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap, the Joint Geological and Geophysical Research Station, and the Learmonth Solar Observatory....

“These facilities provide critical functions that directly support our national security, which we would not be able to realise by ourselves...

“We also collaborate through Australian owned and controlled facilities, such as the Harold E Holt Naval Communication Station and the Australian Defence Satellite Communication Station....

“These joint and collaborative facilities support the effectiveness of the extended deterrence commitments the United States provides.

>>> So, to which ADF bases do United States Forces/Contractors have access under the 2014 Force Posture Agreement ?

# Categories of US bases in Australia – and the FPA

- Types:
  - Airfields and port facilities
  - Communications
  - Training
  - Logistics and sustainment
  - Space and sensor facilities
  - Command, control, intelligence, and surveillance
  - Scientific research
- Australian categories
  - joint
  - collaborative
  - Auspiced under the Force Posture Agreement
  - Auspiced under other agreements
- **Force Posture Agreement, Article 1: “Agreed Facilities and Areas” means the facilities and areas in the territory of Australia provided by Australia which may be listed in Annex A appended to this Agreement, and such other facilities and areas in the territory of Australia as may be provided by Australia in the future, to which United States Forces, United States Contractors, dependants, and other United States Government personnel as mutually agreed, shall have the right to access and use pursuant to this Agreement.’**
- **So, to what bases does the United States (Forces/Contractors) have access under the FPA? Where is Annex A?**

# United States-Australia Force Posture construction projects in the Northern Territory

## Northern Territory Training Areas and Ranges Upgrades Project

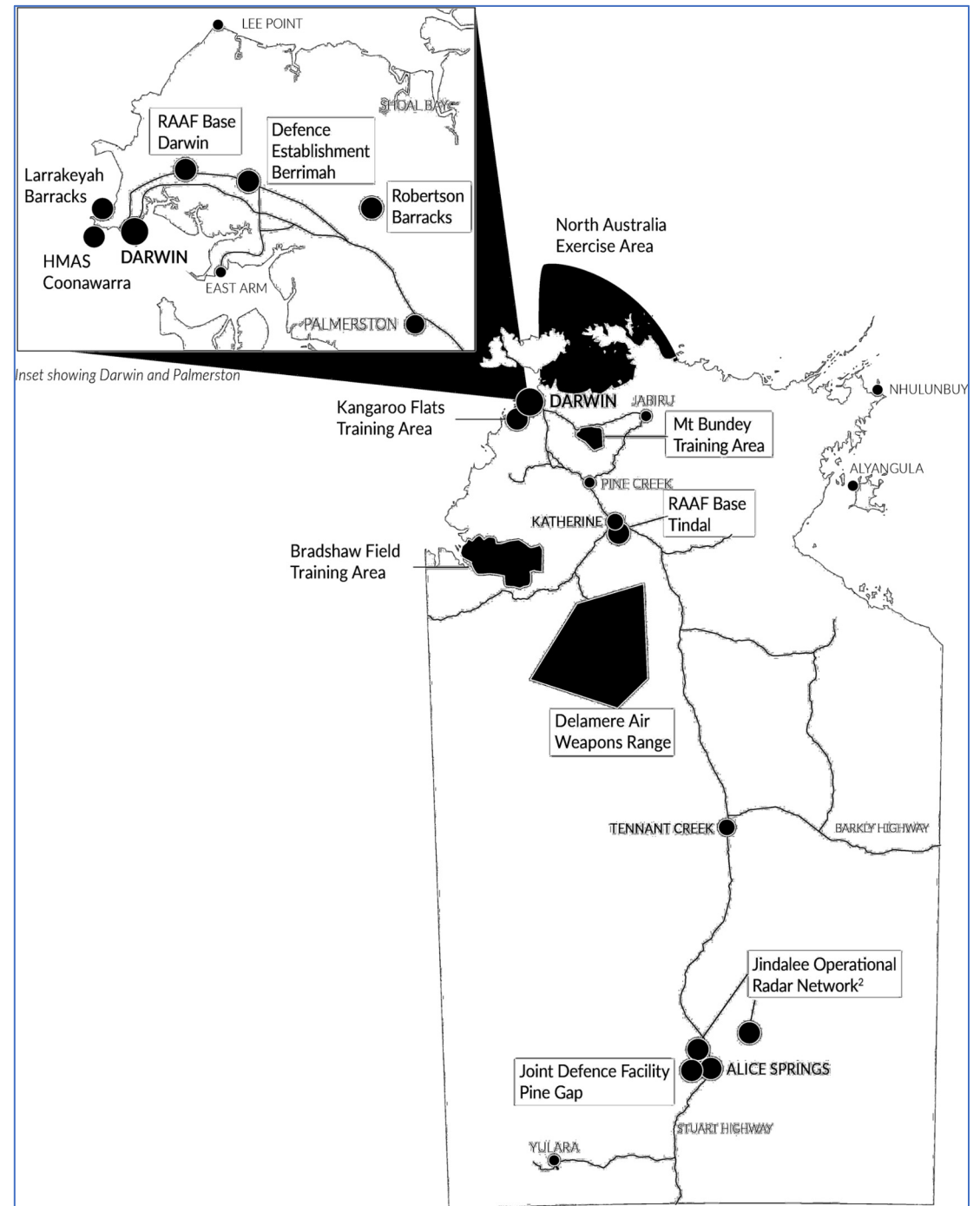
(Marine Air-Ground Task Force)

Robertson Barracks Close Training Area,  
Kangaroo Flats Training Area,  
Mount Bunday Training Area  
Bradshaw Field Training Area

## RAAF Base Tindal expansion

RAAF  
USAF

**U.S. Bulk Liquid Storage Facility, East Arm, Darwin**  
(Defense Logistics Agency / Crowley Solutions)





Bulk Fuel Facility, East Arm, Darwin,  
(top centre right)  
(Google Earth, 8 August 2022)



U.S. Bulk Fuel Facility, East Arm,  
Darwin,  
U.S. Defense Logistics Agency /  
Crowley Solutions

Storage capacity =  
80 million gallons / 303 million litres



May 2023, courtesy of Justin Tuddy



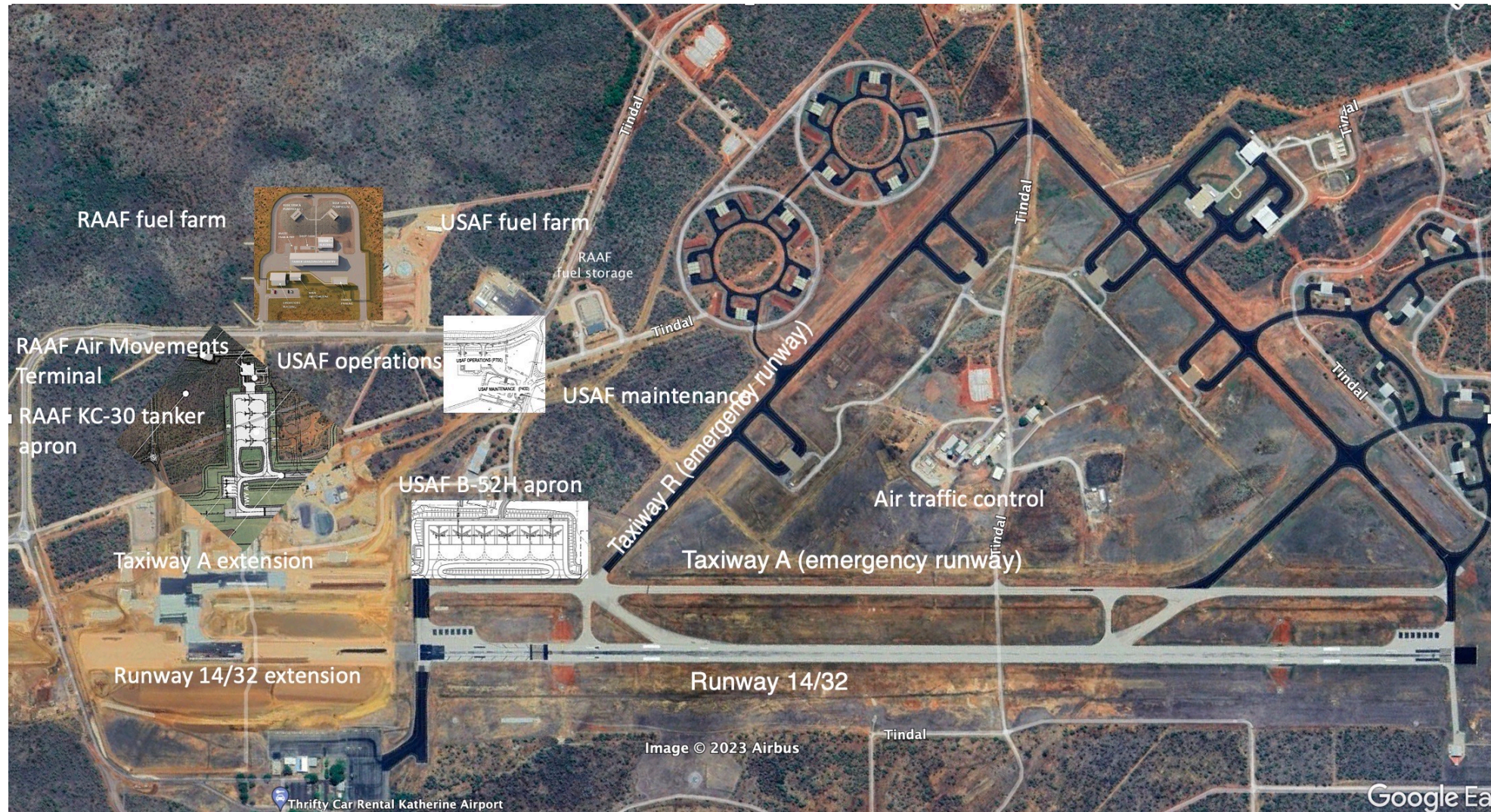
## RAAF Base Tindal (c. 2020)



Source: Submission 1. Department of Defence, *RAAF Base Tindal Redevelopment Stage 6 and United States Force Posture Initiatives Airfield Works*, Parliament of Australia, Standing Committee on Public Works, 2020.

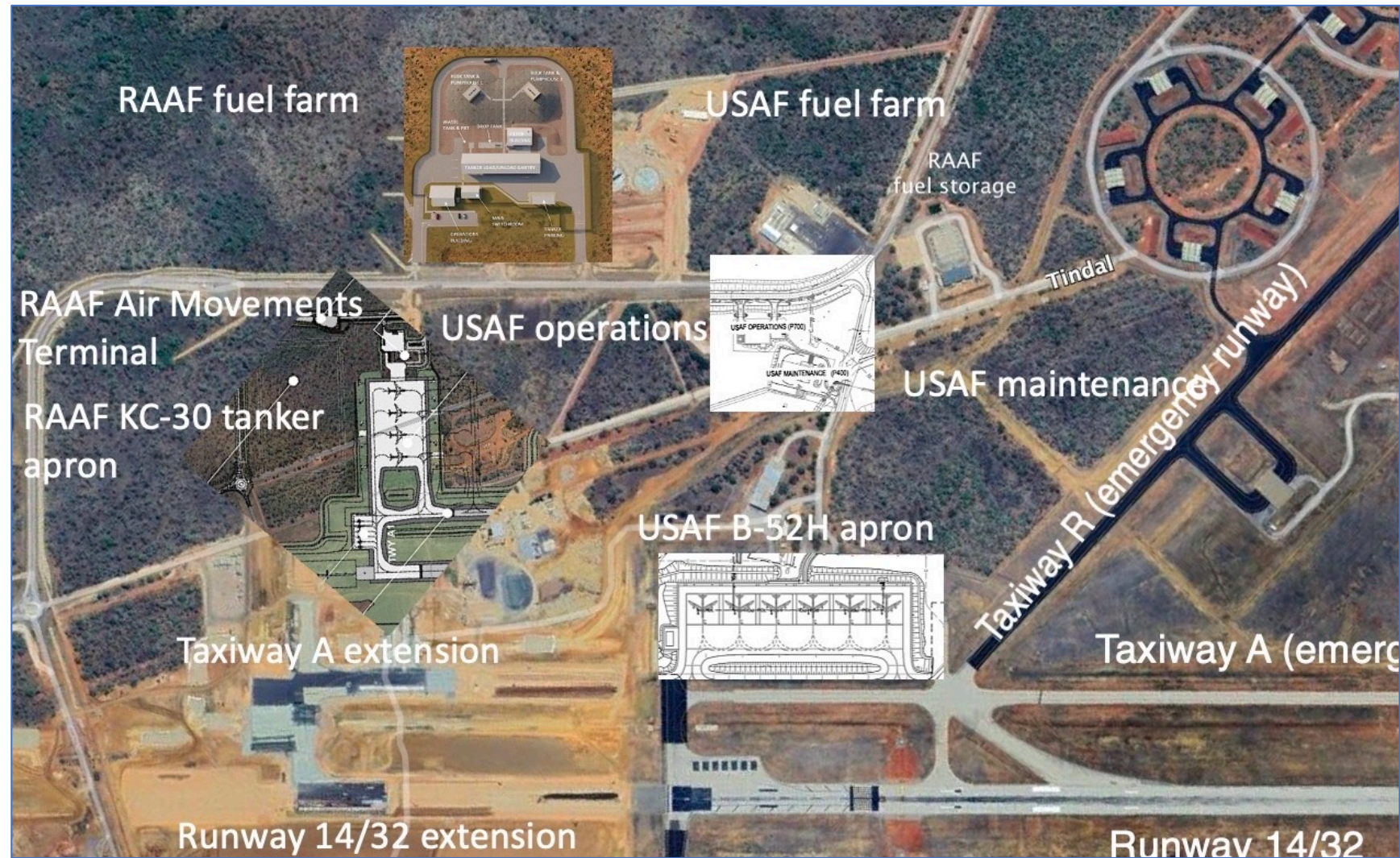


# RAAF Base Tindal – RAAF and USAF extensions and expansion





# RAAF Base Tindal – US-Australia Force Posture Initiative expansion

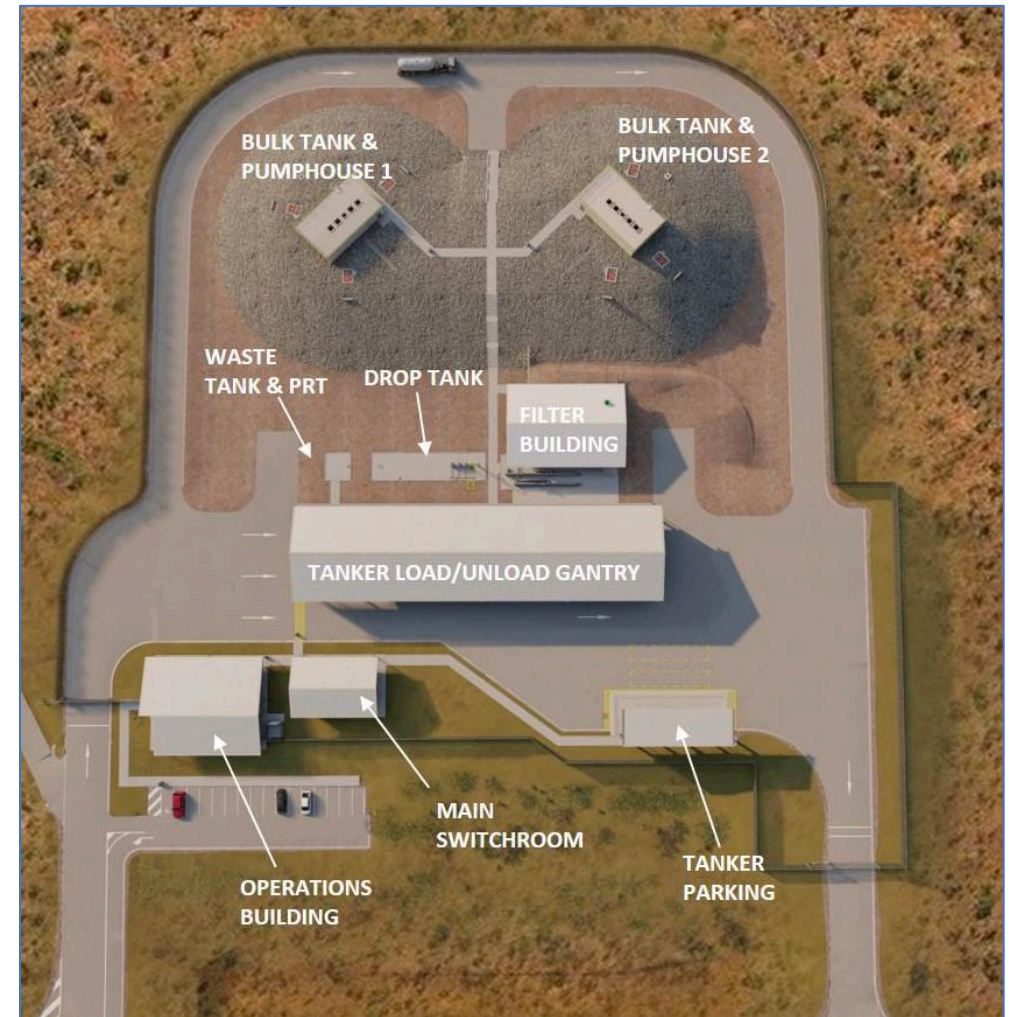
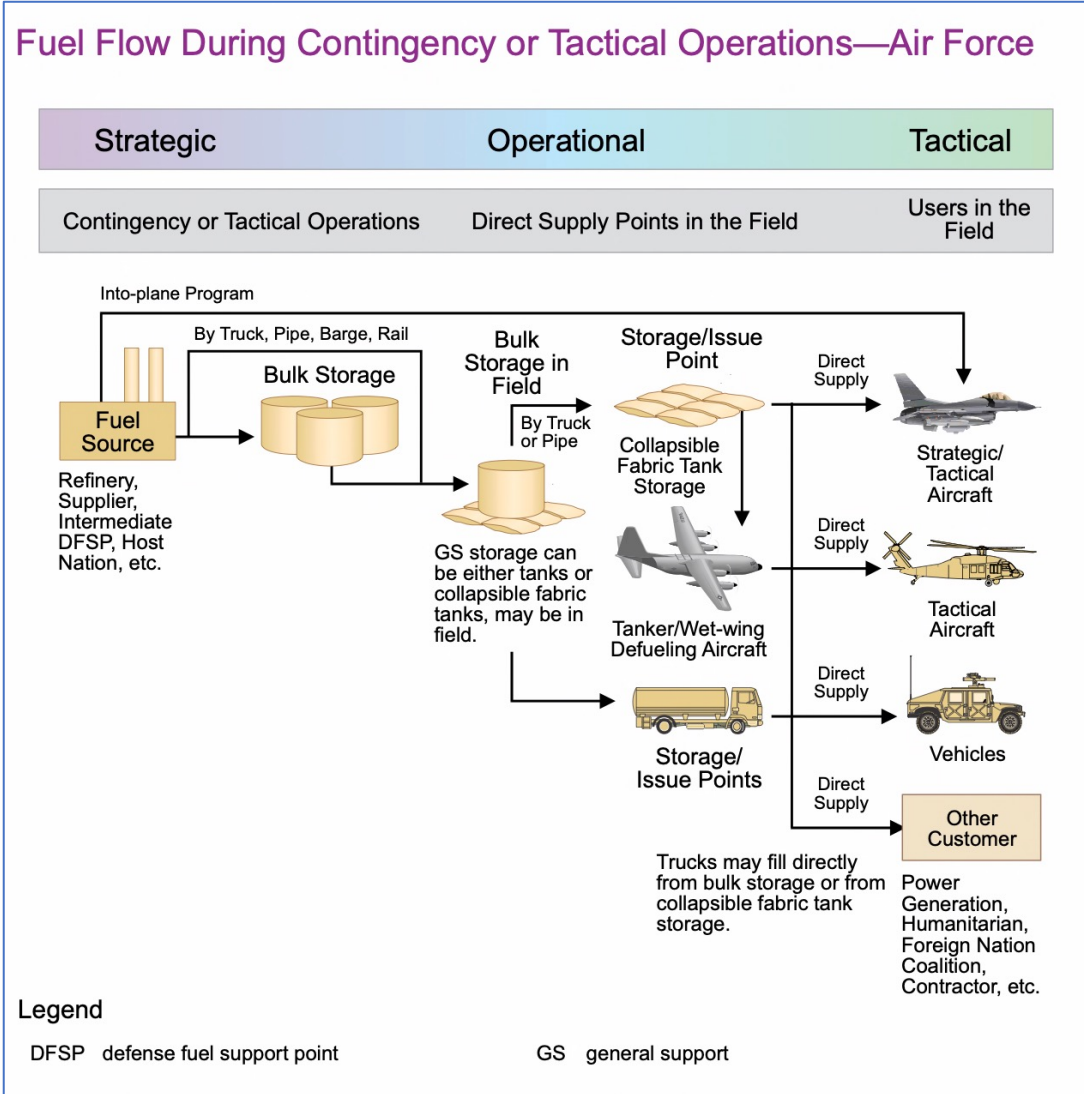


Sources: Google Earth, 5 November 2022; Submission 1. Department of Defence, [RAAF Base Tindal Redevelopment Stage 6 and United States Force Posture Initiatives Airfield Works](#), Parliament of Australia, Standing Committee on Public Works, 2020; Industry Capability Network, [EST00346 TDL Redev / EST00347 KC-30A Facilities, Work Package: Invitation to Register \(ITR\) Brief, Project Registration Form, EST00346 RAAF Base Tindal Redevelopment Stage 6 and EST00347, US Force Posture Initiatives \(USFPI\) RAAF Base Tindal Airfield, Works and Associated Infrastructure](#), [accessed 14 May 2023]; Ashley Townsend/@ashleytownshend, [‘There’s nothing new about B-52s deploying to Australia’](#), Twitter, 31 October 2022.



# US Joint Chiefs of Staff fuel logistics planning schematic:

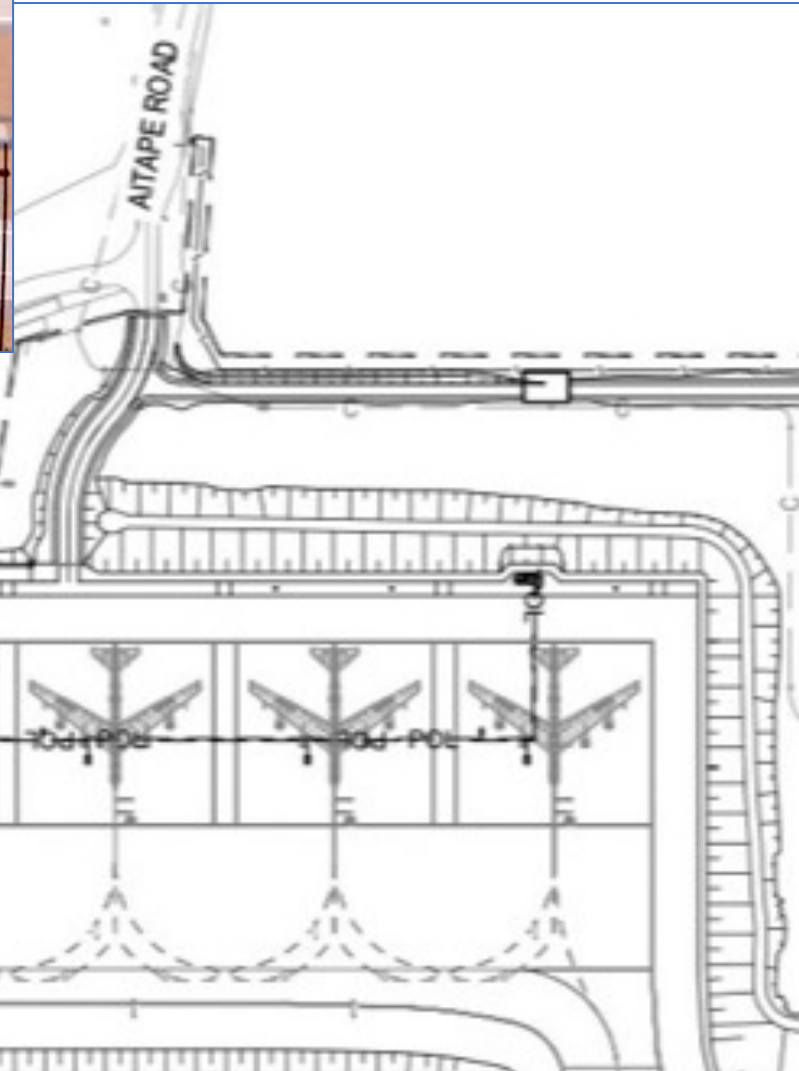
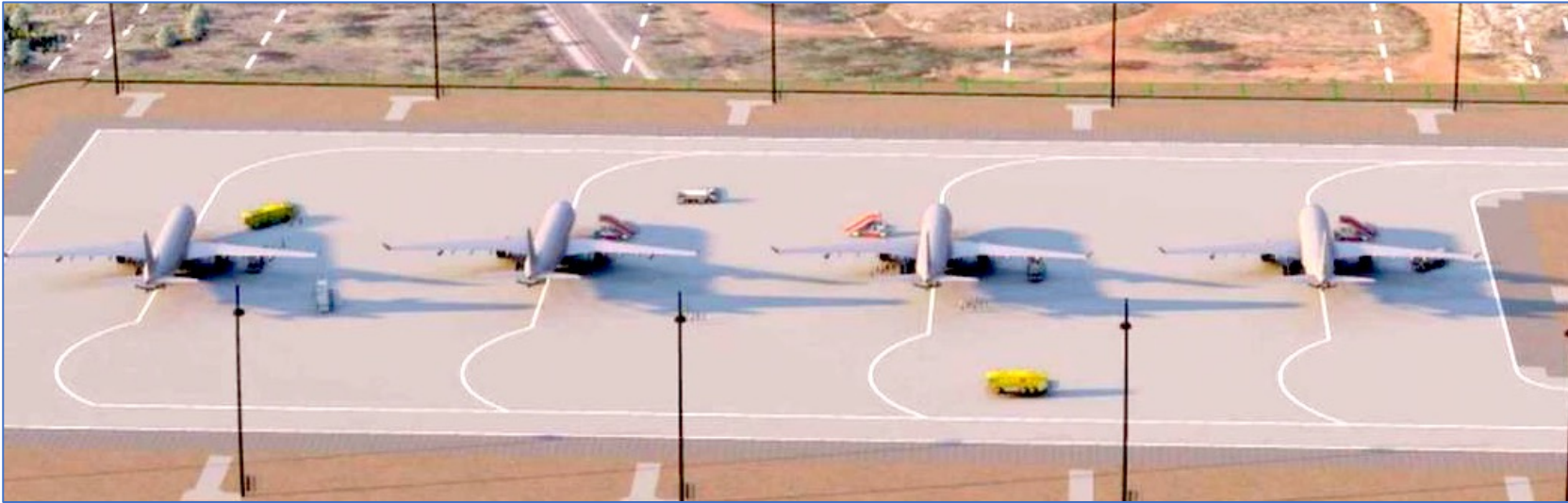
# RAAF Fuel Farm, Force Posture Initiative, RAAF Tindal (6 million litres capacity)



Sources: Joint Chiefs of Staff, [Joint Bulk Petroleum and Water Doctrine, JP 4-03](#), 11 January 2016, Figure IV-5; Industry Capability Network, [EST00346 TDL Redev / EST00347 KC-30A Facilities, Work Package: Invitation to Register \(ITR\) Brief, Project Registration Form](#), EST00346 RAAF Base Tindal Redevelopment Stage 6 and EST00347, US Force Posture Initiatives (USFPI) RAAF Base Tindal Airfield, Works and Associated Infrastructure, [accessed 14 May 2023].



# RAAF KC-30 refueling tankers and USAF B-52H long range bombers to be deployed to RAAF Tindal



Sources: Ashley Townsend/@ashleytownshend, [‘There's nothing new about B-52s deploying to Australia’](#), *Twitter*, 31 October 2022; Andrew McLaughlin, [‘RAAF Tindal upgrade work commences’](#), *ADBR*, 8 September 2020.



Bulk Fuel Facility, East Arm, Darwin,  
(top centre right)  
(Google Earth, 8 August 2022)



U.S. Bulk Fuel Facility, East Arm,  
Darwin,  
U.S. Defense Logistics Agency /  
Crowley Solutions

Storage capacity =  
80 million gallons / 303 million litres



May 2023, courtesy of Justin Tuddy

## 'Transit' of nuclear-armed ships and aircraft under the Treaty of Raratonga

- **The South Pacific Nuclear Weapons Free Zone treaty prohibits 'stationing' of nuclear weapons in the territory of the countries in the SPNWFZ, but permits 'transit' or 'visits' of nuclear-armed ships or aircraft:**
  - Under Art. 1. "“Stationing” means emplantation, emplacement, transportation on land or inland waters, stockpiling, storage, installation and deployment.’
  - Under Article 5 (2) ‘Each Party in the exercise of its sovereign rights remains free to decide for itself whether to allow visits by foreign ships and aircraft to its ports and airfields, transit of its airspace by foreign aircraft, and navigation by foreign ships in its territorial sea or archipelagic waters...’
- **Neither the treaty nor the Australian enabling act defines or delimits the meaning, frequency, or duration either 'transit' or 'visit'.**
  - During the negotiations leading up to the treaty, some pacific island countries expressed concern about this failing in the draft, but were opposed by the Australian chair.

### **Current government policy re 'transit'/'visit' and nuclear-armed B-52s (Greg Moriarty, Secretary, DFAT, and Penny Wong.**

**Minister of Foreign Affairs),** [Budget Supplementary Estimates 2022–23](#), *Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee, Wednesday, 15 February 2023*

- Moriarty, prepared answer to a question from Senator Jordan Steele-John (and later, Sen David Shoebridge): **'Australia's longstanding arrangements to support visits by US strategic assets are consistent with our obligations under the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.** US bomber aircraft have been visiting Australia since the early 1980s and have conducted training in Australia since 2005. **Successive Australian governments have understood and respected the longstanding US policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear weapons on particular platforms.** Australia will continue to fully comply with our international obligations, and the United States understands and respects Australia's international obligations with respect to nuclear weapons.'



(After a confrontation between Wong and Steele-John, and a break to prepare Moriarty's answer above):

Senator SHOEBRIDGE: Mr Moriarty, I fully understand that Australia doesn't challenge the US position, where it simply won't confirm or deny whether or not any of its platforms carry nuclear weapons. I understand that. I'm not asking you to confirm or deny whether or not nuclear weapons are on United States B-52 bombers at any particular time while they're in Australia.

My question is quite different to that. It is: **Do you understand that Australia's treaty obligations do not prohibit Australia permitting the US to bring B-52 bombers to Australia, which have the potential to carry nuclear weapons?**

Senator Wong: By implication, you are actually—

Senator SHOEBRIDGE: It's a simple question.

Senator Wong: Let me finish.

Senator SHOEBRIDGE: You may not like it, but it's a simple question that deserves an answer.

Senator Wong: Why don't you go and give a speech if you don't want to listen? By implication, of course you are asking him to confirm or deny—

Senator SHOEBRIDGE: No, I'm not.

Senator Wong: By taking as a factual basis that there are, that is clearly contrary to the position he has articulated.

Senator SHOEBRIDGE: I said 'they can'.

Senator Wong: Maybe you should just give a speech.

Senator SHOEBRIDGE: You could let the secretary answer.

Senator Wong: I'm trying to answer the question.

Senator SHOEBRIDGE: He's trying to answer.

**Senator Wong: I'm the minister and I'm responding. I'm pointing out that the rotation of US forces has been a reality of our relationship with the United States. It is part of ensuring that we maintain that interoperability that goes towards making Australia safe. We have tried to be helpful in indicating our commitment to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. We are fully committed to that.** And we've given you the answer that the secretary has given you. I'm not going to engage in any more hypotheticals, because I don't actually think your questioning is anything more than trying to drum up concern, and I don't think it's responsible.

Countries with defence agreements with the United States publicly specifying  
Agreed Facilities and Areas to which US forces have access

Country	Agreement	Stated Agreed Facilities and Areas
Afghanistan	<a href="#">Security and Defense Cooperation Agreement</a> (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kabul</li> <li>• Bagram</li> <li>• Mazar-e-Sharif</li> <li>• Herat</li> <li>• Kandahar</li> <li>• Shorab (Helmand)</li> <li>• Gardez</li> <li>• Jalalabad</li> <li>• Shīnḍanḍ</li> </ul>
Hungary	Defense Cooperation Agreement (2019) Implementing Agreements, <a href="#">July 2021</a> and <a href="#">December 2021</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kecskemét Air Force Base</li> <li>• Pápa Air Force Base</li> <li>• Tata and Várpalota Garrison and Training Areas</li> </ul>
Norway	<a href="#">Supplementary Defense Cooperation Agreement</a> , (2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rygge Military Air Station</li> <li>• Sola Military Air Station and Airfield,</li> <li>• Evenes Military Air Station and Airfield,</li> <li>• Ramsund Naval Station</li> </ul>

<p>Philippines</p>	<p><u>Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (2014)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Antonio Bautista Air Base</li> <li>• Balabac Island, Palawan</li> <li>• Camp Melchor Dela Cruz, Gamu, Isabela</li> <li>• Cesar Basa Air Base, Pampanga</li> <li>• Fort Magsaysay Military Reservation</li> <li>• Lal-lo Airport, Cagayan</li> <li>• Lumbia Air Base,</li> <li>• Mactan Benito Ebuena Air Base</li> <li>• Naval Base Camilo Osias, Santa Ana, Cagayan</li> </ul>
<p>Poland</p>	<p><u>Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (2020)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lask Air Base</li> <li>• Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area</li> <li>• Żagań Training Area (including Military Training Center, and Żagań, Karliki, Trzebieii, Bolesławiec, and Świętoszów Military Complexes)</li> <li>• Skwierzyna Military Complex</li> <li>• Powidz Air Base and Military Complex</li> <li>• Poznań Military Complex</li> <li>• Lubliniec Military Complex</li> <li>• Toruń Military Complex</li> <li>• <u>Orzysz</u> / Bemowo Piskie Training Area</li> <li>• Mirosławiec Air Base</li> <li>• Ustka Training Area</li> <li>• Czarne Training Area</li> <li>• Wędrzyn Training Area</li> <li>• Biedrusko Training Area</li> <li>• Nowa Dęba Training Area</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nowa Dęba Training Area</li> <li>• Wrocław Airport</li> <li>• Kraków-Balice Airport</li> <li>• Katowice Airport (Pyrzowice)</li> <li>• Dęblin Air Base</li> </ul>



# What practical steps for the 2014 Force Posture Agreement?

1. Full and updated list of ADF bases covered by the FPA.
2. Clarification of which ADF bases are “collaborative” bases, and what is their relationship to FPA-auspicing?
3. Comprehensive public data on activities, construction, operations, and presence of US Forces (USF) and US Contractors (USC).
4. Civil society monitoring of USF/USC activities at all FPA-auspiced Australian bases
5. Revision of the 2014 Force Posture Agreement
  - review every five years
  - renegotiation of 25 year duration of the FPA
  - base-by-base review of USF/USC activities re
    - International law
    - Australian national interests
    - Impact on regional and global peace
6. Active linkage and cooperation with governments and civil society in countries dealing with similar Agreed Locations and Facilities agreements with the United States.
7. Parliamentary inquiry into the operation and adequacy of “Full Knowledge and Concurrence”.
8. Action by the Australian government to exclude any USAF nuclear weapons presence in Australia:
  - Signing and ratification of the TPNW
  - Rejection of ‘understanding of and respect for’ US policy of refusing to either confirm nor deny the presence of US nuclear weapons entering Australia
  - Revision of the Treaty of Raratonga to either define and limit the meaning of ‘transit’ and ‘visit’ under the treaty, or eliminate the transit exception
  - Require the US to ratify the three protocols to the Raratonga Treaty.

## US fast attack submarine visits to Australia, 2022-23 (to 20.05.23)

Port	Dates	Vessel	Class	Homeport	Unit
HMAS Stirling	2023.03.01 - 2023.03.20	USS Asheville (SSN 758)	Los Angeles	Naval Base Guam	Submarine Squadron 15 (CSS-15)
HMAS Stirling	2022.11.28 - 2022.12.01	USS Mississippi (SSN 782)	Virginia	Pearl Harbour	Submarine Group 7
HMAS Stirling	2022.04.22 - 2022.04.28	USS Springfield (SSN 761)	Los Angeles	Naval Base Guam	Submarine Squadron 15 (CSS-15)

Sources: William M. Arkin, [‘American submarine operations in 2022’](#), *Bill’s Black Box of Government Secrets*, 29 April 2023; [‘Visit by Deputy Prime Minister Caps Busy Port Visit for USS Asheville in Australia’](#), *Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet*, 26 March 2023.

## US Navy: Darwin port visits, 2000 – 2013 (September), Richard Tanter

- Updated: 27 September 2013 Note on data and sources:
- The comprehensiveness and reliability of this dataset is uneven. For periods when the principal sources are answers to parliamentary questions on notice, there is a high likelihood information is both comprehensive and reliable. In other periods, data is less complete, and in some instances less reliable.
- Periods not covered by parliamentary questions at this time are January-December 2000, December 2006 – February 2007, and August 2008 to the present (highlighted). Care should be taken with interpretations of data presented in these periods. In the periods for which parliamentary sources are available, comparison with data available from other sources for the same period indicates that currently available non- parliamentary sources report less than 25-50% of all USN ship visits according to parliamentary sources (see endnotes). In part this is due to the fact that non-parliamentary sources rarely report visits of non-combat ships, such as oilers, ammunition ships, combat stores ship, and hospital ships, even though these are essential parts of 7th Fleet operations and Marine Expeditionary Units. Consequently, actual numbers of visits in the highlighted period entries are somewhat higher than this data shows.
- General information on ships is drawn from government sources including [America's Navy](#), [U.S.Navy's Military Sealift Command](#), [Task Force 76 Command List – Amphibious Force Seventh Fleet](#), and from non-government sources such as [U.S. Carriers - United States Ships \(USS\) history and deployments](#), [SeaWaves](#), [GlobalSecurity.org](#), [NavSource Naval History - Photographic History of the U.S. Navy](#), [Wikipedia](#), as well as media sources, especially the [Northern Territory News](#).
- Email: rtanter@nautilus.org